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THE SOURCES OF GREENE'S *Orlando Furioso*

The opinion of scholars concerning the sources of Greene's *Orlando Furioso* is that the dramatist borrowed little more than the title of his play and the name of his characters from the great poem then at the height of its fame. The layman naturally wonders why anyone should content himself with a mere handful from a king's treasury. What do we actually know about the matter?

For one thing, we know that practically every situation in Greene's *Orlando Furioso* has its analogue in Ariosto's. Thus in the play Angelica brings war upon her lenient father by choosing from "an embassy of suitors," as one scholar calls them, the least exalted of their number, Count Orlando, who, however, promptly appears before the castle of one of them and after sending in a fruitless challenge by a sentry storms the place and without pausing to take part in the massacre of the garrison pursues his rival to the death; the other competitors he deals with similarly later. In the poem (Canto ix) the Princess Olympia similarly brings war upon an equally lenient father by keeping her faith to the young Duke of Zealand despite the representations of an embassy of distinguished men who request her hand in behalf of the King of Frisia; whereupon Orlando, who happens by, appears before the King's city, and after sending in a fruitless challenge by a sentry storms the place and "taking no notice of the common herd" pursues the King to his death. In the play one of the rejected suitors, the crafty Sacripant, causes Angelica to be banished, then condemned to death by her father, by falsely representing her as unchastely faithless to Orlando, who, however, rescues her, clears her name, and wrings confession and life from her accuser. In the poem (Canto iv) another scheming aspirant to the hand of another princess attempts precisely the same thing (and incidentally furnishes Shakespeare with the similar episode in *Much Ado About Nothing*); whereupon the knight Rinaldo wrings confession and life from him, having first rescued the princess's maid from ruffians in a forest precisely as Orlando, in the play, rescues Angelica. In both play and poem Orlando goes mad when he becomes convinced that Angelica is false to him. In both play and poem he recovers in exactly three months.

Now Greene was thoroughly familiar with this material when between 1588 and 1590 he wrote his play. He quotes in the original from Canto xxi in *Francesco's Fortunes* and from Canto xxvi in *The Spanish Masquerado*; he takes from Canto xxxiv the story of Lydia in his *Orpharion*; he twice alludes to Canto xix in *Alcida*; he gives us as translated from the poem three stanzas in *Penelope's Web*.

Greene was not only familiar with the poem; he had it fresh in memory, if indeed not actually before him, at the time I speak of.

In his play itself he quotes in the original from Canto xxvii (Act II, Scene i), accurately translates from Canto xv (Act I, Scene i), paraphrases the description, in Canto xli, of Orlando's helmet, and so closely follows the description of Orlando's attempts at self-delusion in Canto xxiii that it amounts to paraphrasing (Act II, Scene i).

All this established, the opinion I am discussing may be re-stated as follows: Greene took the title of his play, the names of his characters, and various descriptive details from a famous poem which he had thoroughly and freshly in mind; then created situations similar to those in the poem without being in any way influenced by it in so doing.

My question is, How did he manage it? Never mind what other suggestions contributed, How did this one come to be excluded? If, after I have been reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a travelled friend calls on me and describes the parting of husbands from wives, mothers from children, in no matter what slave-mart, shall I recall nothing? And if I set about writing up my friend's account, shall I receive no promptings from what I have read? True, that account may be so vivid and circumstantial as completely to overshadow Mrs. Stowe's pages; or I may deliberately seek to put them out of my mind, as indeed some of us often have. But is it common sense to presume that this was the case with Greene? What could more powerfully suggest to him the peculiar atmosphere of his play than a work which was then "the most famous romance poem of Europe? And why should he deliberately reject suggestions from it? If in the sixties someone had written a play entitled *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, would he have thought it expedient to exclude precisely what his public would be led to expect?

CHARLES W. LEMMI.

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#### TWO NOTES ON CHAUCER

(1) Koeppel,<sup>1</sup> commenting on Schick's suggestion<sup>2</sup> that Chaucer's "Anelida" probably refers to the same character of romance as the "Analida" of the Italian poem, *L'Intelligenza*(i)a,<sup>3</sup> and the "Alydes" of Froissart's *Dit dou Bleu Chevalier*, proposes to read "Emony" (= Hæmonia, that is, Thessaly) for "Ermony." There is, however, no difficulty in assuming that Chaucer had in mind

<sup>1</sup> *Eng. Stud.*, I, 156-8; cf. Tatlock, *Dev. and Chron. of Chaucer's Works*, p. 86, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Lydgate, *Temple of Glass*, ed. Schick, p. cxx, note.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Gaspari, *Ital. Lit. to the Death of Dante*, pp. 199-202.